DC
BATMAN
75¢
402
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THERE'S NOTHING SO SAVAGE--
--AS A MAN DESTROYING HIMSELF!
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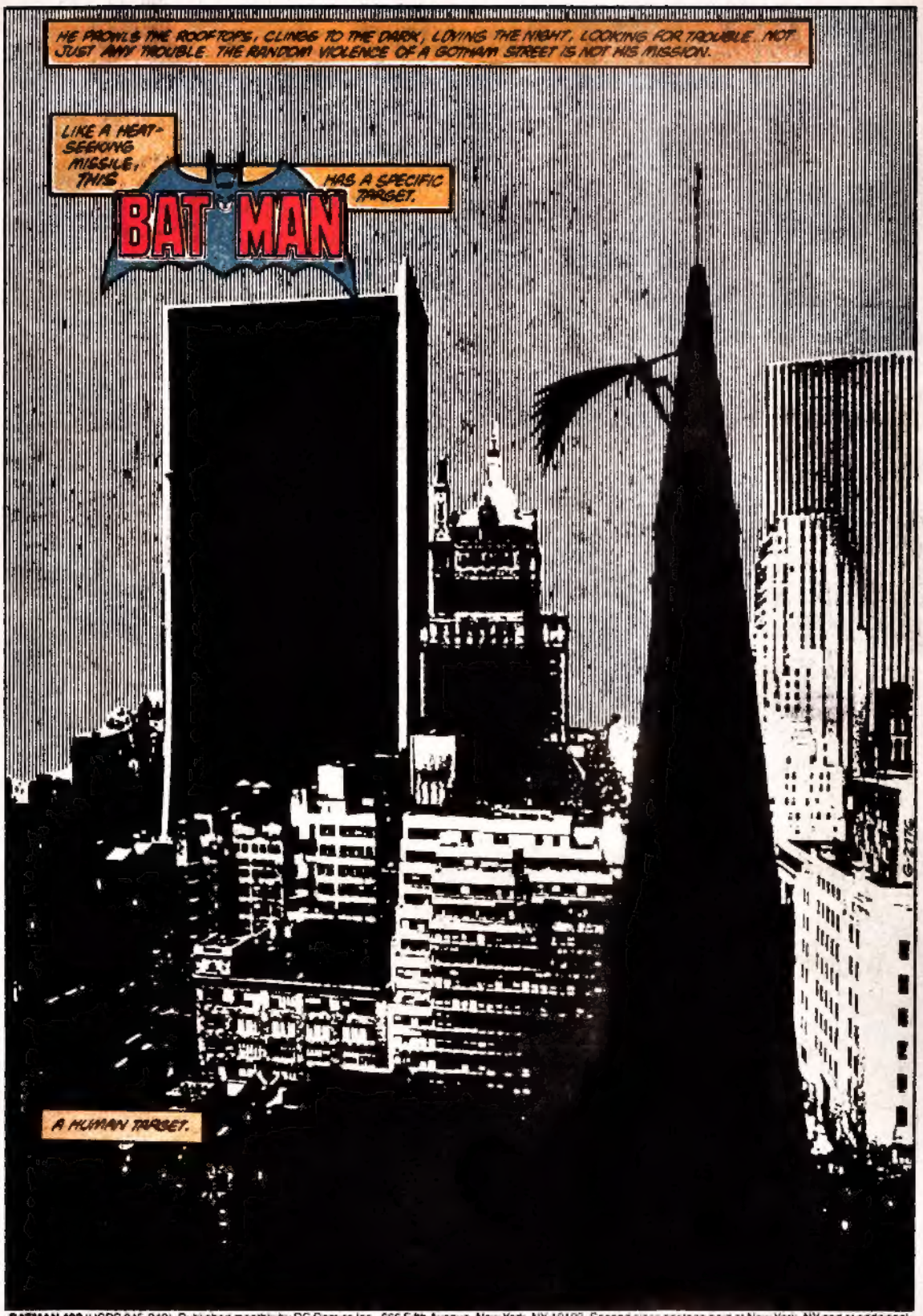
HE PROWLS THE ROOFTOPS, CLINGS TO THE DARK, LOVING THE NIGHT, LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. NOT JUST ANY TROUBLE. THE RANDOM VIOLENCE OF A GOTHAM STREET IS NOT HIS MISSION.
LIKE A HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE, THIS
BATMAN
HAS A SPECIFIC TARGET.
A HUMAN TARGET.

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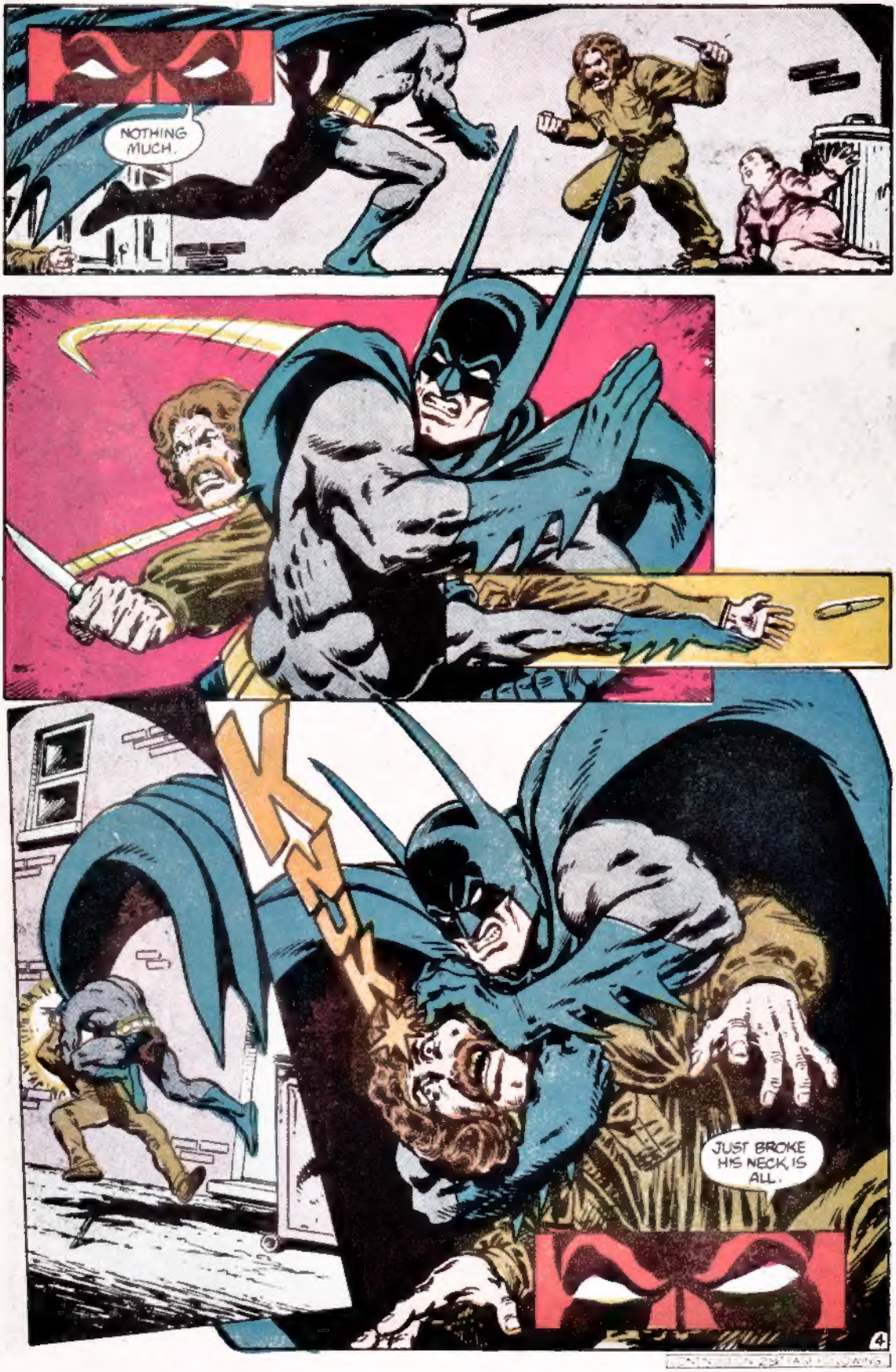
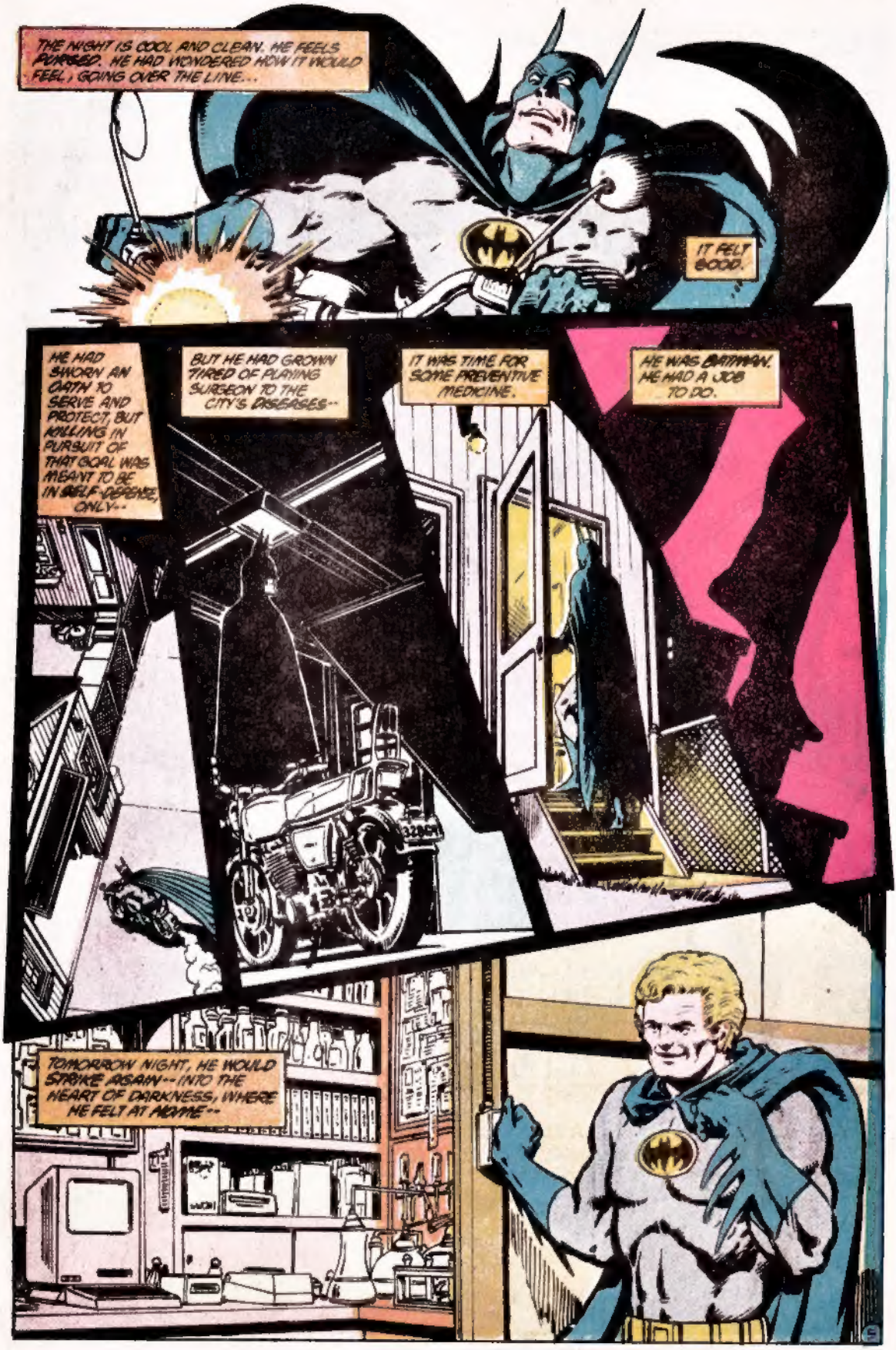
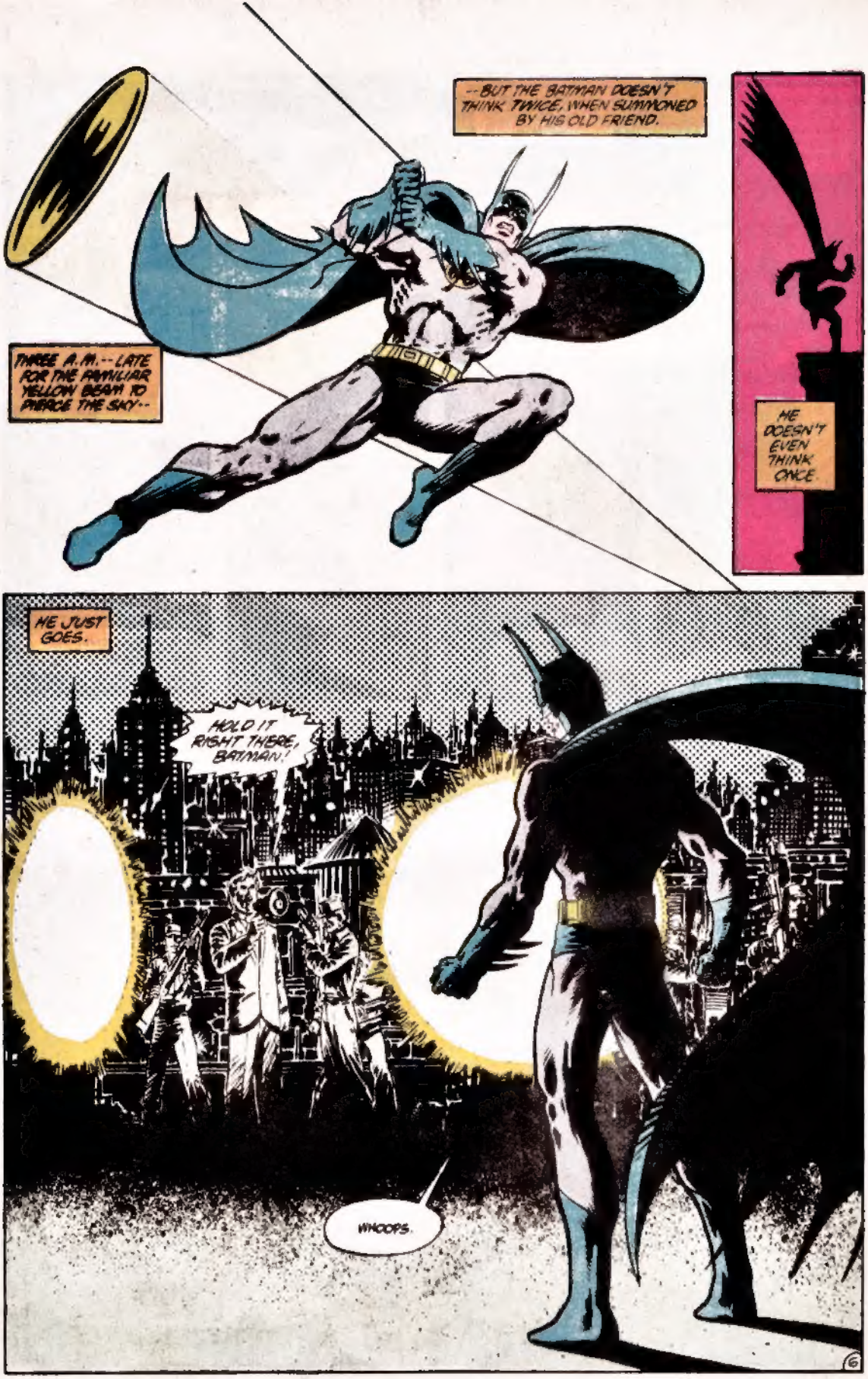
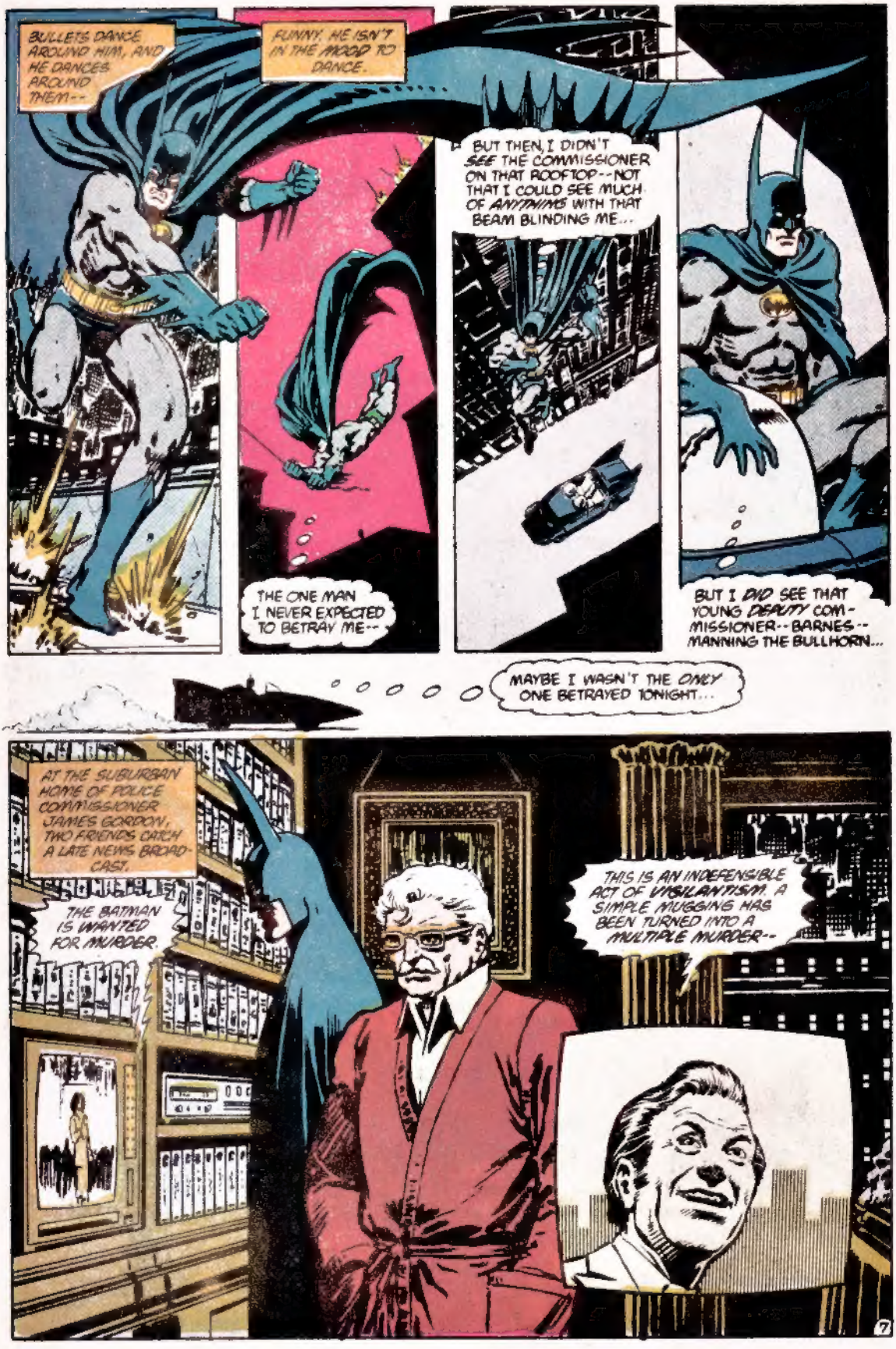
MEET DICK AND JANE. AN UPWARDLY MOBILE COUPLE. THEY'RE SLUMMING TONIGHT-- BECAUSE THEY'RE INTO ROCK 'N' ROLL.
I LIKED THE PSYCHEDELIC INFLUENCES.
I WASN'T IMPRESSED -- THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING THE VELVET UNDERGROUND DIDN'T DO BETTER, YEARS AGO--
AND THEY'RE ABOUT TO GET ROLLED. AND ROCKED.
THAT REMINDS ME-- WERE YOU ABLE TO GET THOSE TICKETS?
TO THE DEL FUEGOS GIG? OF COURSE! WOULD I EVER DISAPPOINT YOU?
YOUR WALLET OR YOUR TEETH, CREEP--
TAKE IT! IT'S ONLY MONEY-- JUST DON'T HURT ME-- OR MY LADY--
GOD, I HATE THE WAY YOU TALK! "ONLY MONEY"... YOUR "LADY"! YUCCH!
SO I'LL TAKE YOUR TEETH, TOO, WIMP.
2

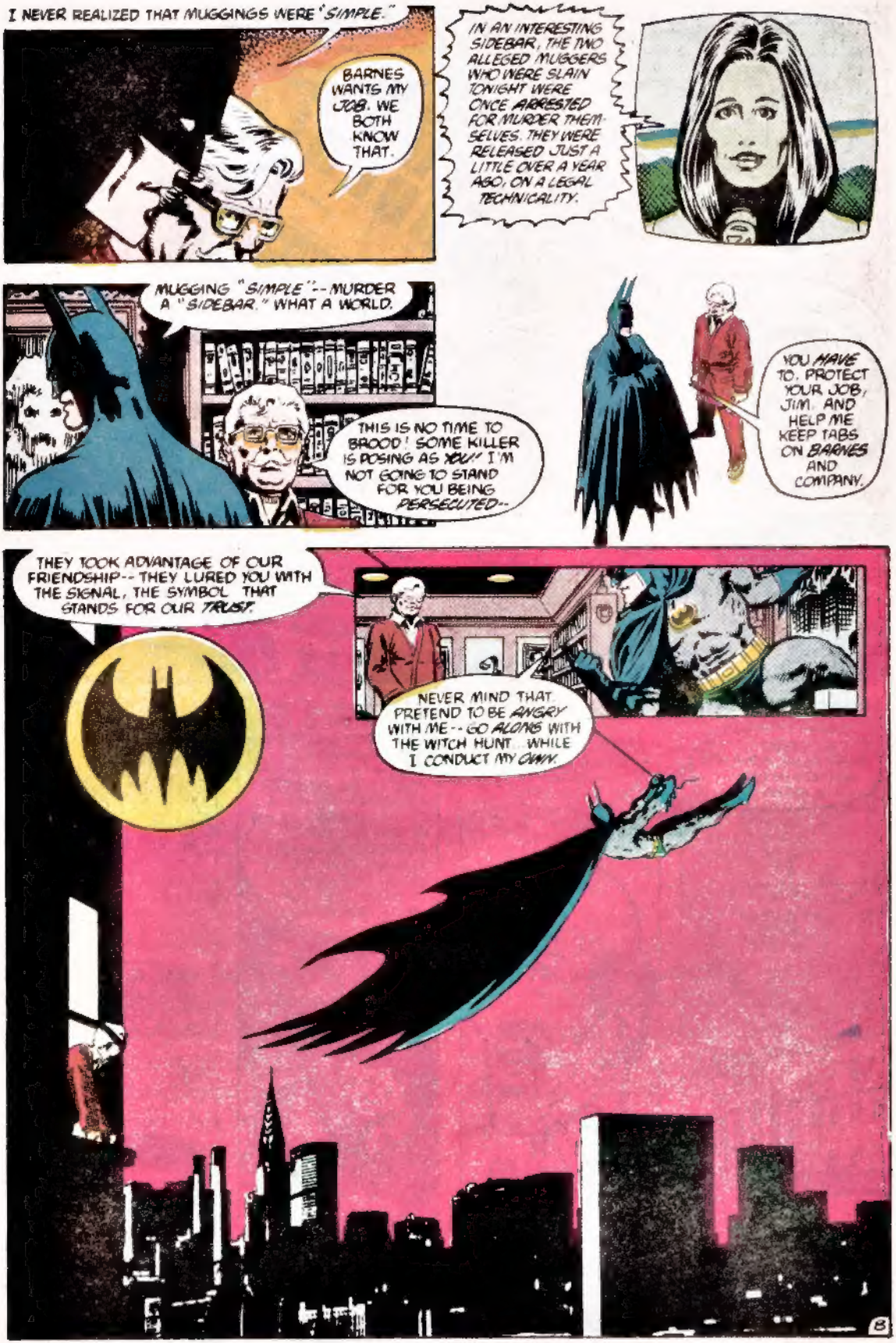
I'LL CHECK THE SLIMEBUCKET FOR JEWELRY AND STUFF, ROACH YOU HANDLE THE BABE--
WHAT-WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
KNUK!
HUH?
I LOVE IT WHEN THEY ASK THAT--
BATMAN! WHAT THE HELL D'YOU DO TO SPIDER?
3

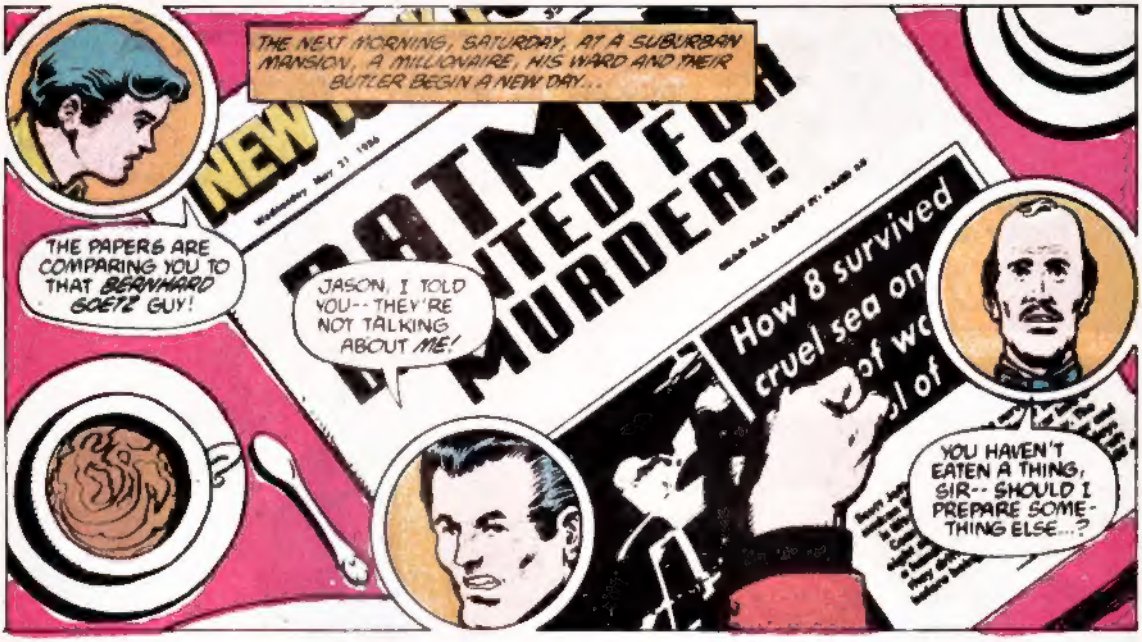

NOTHING MUCH.
KNUK
JUST BROKE HIS NECK, IS ALL.


THE NIGHT IS COOL AND CLEAN. HE FEELS PURGED. HE HAD WONDERED HOW IT WOULD FEEL, GOING OVER THE LINE...
IT FELT GOOD.
HE HAD SWORN AN OATH TO SERVE AND PROTECT, BUT KILLING IN PURSUIT OF THAT GOAL WAS MEANT TO BE IN SELF-DEFENSE, ONLY--
BUT HE HAD GROWN TIRED OF PLAYING SURGEON TO THE CITY'S DISEASES--
IT WAS TIME FOR SOME PREVENTIVE MEDICINE.
HE WAS BATMAN. HE HAD A JOB TO DO.
TOMORROW NIGHT, HE WOULD STRIKE ASAIN--INTO THE HEART OF DARKNESS, WHERE HE FELT AT HOME--


--BUT THE BATMAN DOESN'T THINK TWICE, WHEN SUMMONED BY HIS OLD FRIEND.
THREE A.M.--LATE FOR THE FAMILIAR YELLOW BEAM TO PIERCE THE SKY--
HE DOESN'T EVEN THINK ONCE.
HE JUST GOES.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, BATMAN!
WHOOPS.
6


BULLETS DANCE AROUND HIM, AND HE DANCES AROUND THEM--
FUNNY. HE ISN'T IN THE MOOD TO DANCE.
THE ONE MAN I NEVER EXPECTED TO BETRAY ME--
BUT THEN, I DIDN'T SEE THE COMMISSIONER ON THAT ROOFTOP--NOT THAT I COULD SEE MUCH OF ANYTHING WITH THAT BEAM BLINDING ME...
BUT I DID SEE THAT YOUNG DEPUTY COMMISSIONER--BARNES--MANNING THE BULLHORN...
MAYBE I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE BETRAYED TONIGHT...
AT THE SUBURBAN HOME OF POLICE COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON, TWO FRIENDS CATCH A LATE NEWS BROADCAST.
THE BATMAN IS WANTED FOR MURDER.
THIS IS AN INDEFENSIBLE ACT OF VIGILANTISM. A SIMPLE MUGGING HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A MULTIPLE MURDER--
7


I NEVER REALIZED THAT MUGGINGS WERE "SIMPLE."
BARNES WANTS MY JOB. WE BOTH KNOW THAT.
IN AN INTERESTING SIDEBAR, THE TWO ALLEGED MUGGERS WHO WERE SLAIN TONIGHT WERE ONCE ARRESTED FOR MURDER THEMSELVES. THEY WERE RELEASED JUST A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO, ON A LEGAL TECHNICALITY.
MUGGING "SIMPLE"--MURDER A "SIDEBAR." WHAT A WORLD.
THIS IS NO TIME TO BROOD! SOME KILLER IS POSING AS YOU! I'M NOT GOING TO STAND FOR YOU BEING PERSECUTED--
YOU HAVE TO. PROTECT YOUR JOB, JIM. AND HELP ME KEEP TABS ON BARNES AND COMPANY.
THEY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR FRIENDSHIP--THEY LURED YOU WITH THE SIGNAL, THE SYMBOL THAT STANDS FOR OUR TRUST.
NEVER MIND THAT. PRETEND TO BE ANGRY WITH ME--GO ALONG WITH THE WITCH HUNT...WHILE I CONDUCT MY OWN.
8

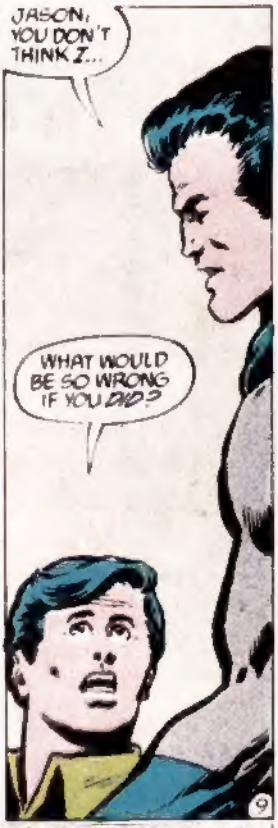

THE NEXT MORNING, SATURDAY, AT A SUBURBAN MANSION, A MILLIONAIRE, HIS WARD AND THEIR BUTLER BEGIN A NEW DAY...
THE PAPERS ARE COMPARING YOU TO THAT BERNHARD GOETZ GUY!
JASON, I TOLD YOU-- THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT ME!
How 8 survived cruel sea on
YOU HAVEN'T EATEN A THING, SIR-- SHOULD I PREPARE SOMETHING ELSE...?

NO, ALFRED-- I'VE GOT A DIFFERENT JOB FOR YOU.
CERTAINLY, SIR.

CALL EVERY THEATRICAL COSTUME AGENCY IN THE CITY.
YES, SIR.

I WANT YOU TO INQUIRE ABOUT RENTING A BATMAN COSTUME.
SIR?

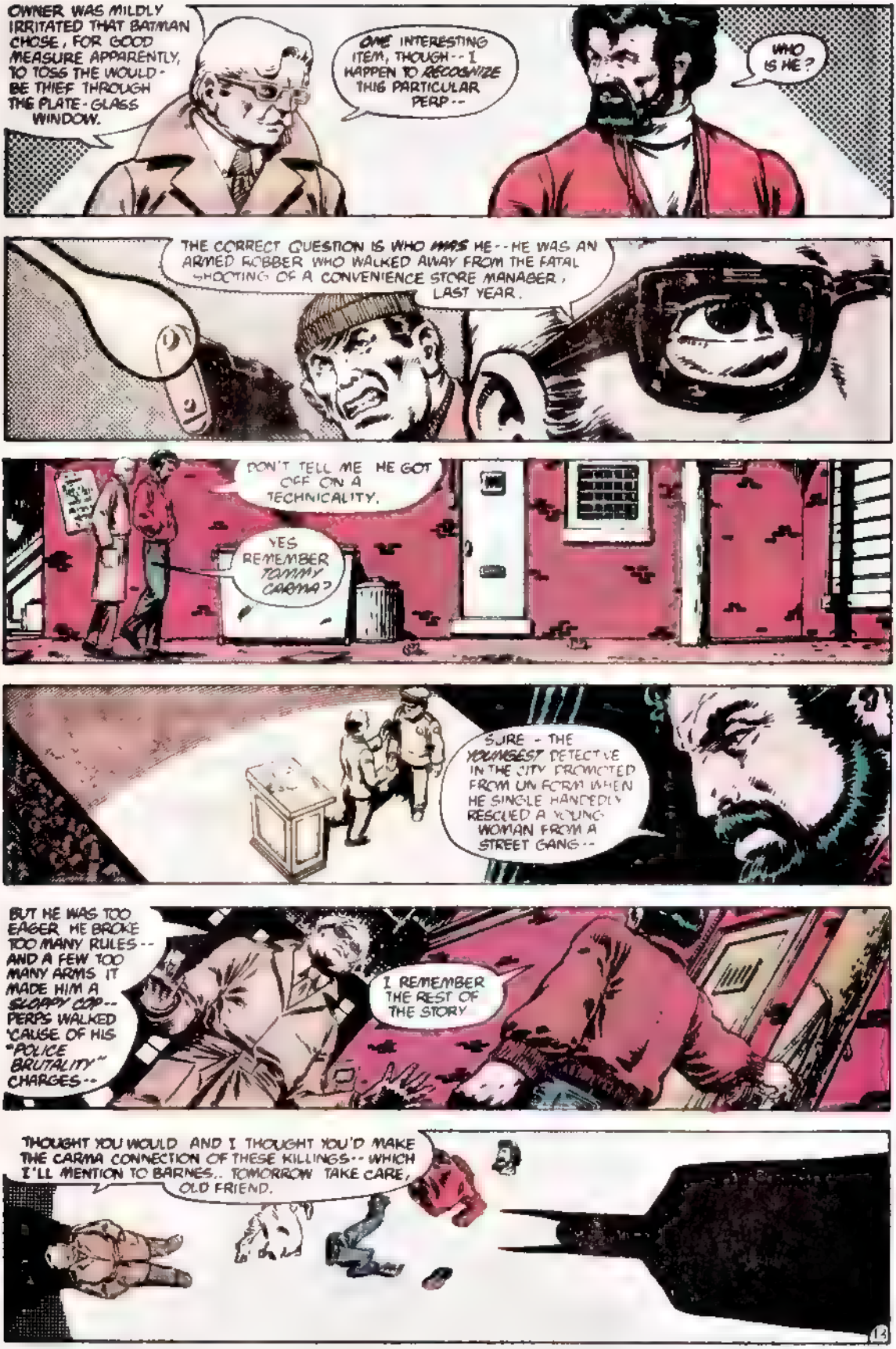
IN THE CAVERN BENEATH THE MANSION, THE MASSIVE CRIME COMPUTER PROVIDES A LEAD--
HERE IT IS... HOWARD DESPOND-- THE NAME OF THE HUSBAND OF THE WOMAN WHO WAS MURDERED BY THOSE MUGGERS THAT YOU... I MEAN, THAT WERE KILLED BY THAT GUY WHO'S POSING AS YOU...


JASON, YOU DON'T THINK I...
WHAT WOULD BE SO WRONG IF YOU DID?
9

I'M NOT A MURDERER, SON. MURDER IS THE LINE WE MUST NOT CROSS--
YOU'VE KILLED BEFORE--
IN SELF-DEFENSE JASON, YOU'RE WELL AWARE THAT WE PLAY A DANGEROUS GAME A GAME I PERHAPS SHOULD NOT HAVE INVOLVED YOU IN
SURE, YOU SHOULD!
LISTEN, SON, IF WE'RE NO BETTER THAN THE CASE WHO SNUFF OUT HUMAN LIFE LIKE IT'S WORTH NOTHING AT ALL, THEN, WELL--
--THEN IT'S TIME I HUNG UP MY COWL.
I GUESS BUT I'M STILL GLAD THOSE GUYS ARE DEAD
ME, TOO, JASON-- BUT I'M NOT PROUD OF IT.
SIR, I'M AFRAID WE'VE STRUCK A DEAD END I FOUND SEVEN COMPANIES IN THE GOTHAM WITH BATMAN COSTUMES FOR RENTAL-- BUT NONE WERE AVAILABLE.
"THEY'VE EVERY ONE BEEN STOLEN"
10

17
YES?
HOWARD DESPOND? I'M BRUCE WAYNE -- WITH THE WAYNE FOUNDATION. AS YOU MAY KNOW WE HAVE A VICTIM'S AID PROGRAM --
PLEASE STEP IN MR. WAYNE. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, OF COURSE -- YOU'RE A VERY WEALTHY FAMOUS MAN
BUT EVEN IF I HAD ALL YOUR MONEY, I COULDN'T PUT MY LIFE BACK TOGETHER.
WE'RE SEEKING TO CHANGE LEGISLATION TO TOUGHEN THINGS UP ON THE PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENT CRIMES -- SO WE'RE INTERVIEWING PEOPLE WHO'VE BEEN VICTIMIZED!
HAVE TO EXCUSE THE PLACE. SUPPOSE I OUGHTA HIRE A HOUSEKEEPER TO COME IN OR SOMETHING. JUST HAVEN'T GOT AROUND TO IT.
LOT OF THINGS I HAVEN'T GOTTEN AROUND TO SINCE MY WIFE WAS MURDERED --
NOBODY SEEMED TO CARE MUCH.
OF COURSE, THERE WAS THAT NICE YOUNG DETECTIVE -- HE CARED -- HE BROKE HIS BUTT NAILING THOSE -- THOSE CREATURES ... THEN THEY WALKED ON A TECHNICALITY!
I'M GLAD THEY'RE DEAD.

NIGHT FALLS, BODY COUNT RISES
JIM
YOUR RECKLESS FRIEND IS REALLY OVER THE EDGE, MR COMMISSIONER. I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU THE MEDIA IS ACCUSING YOU OF SHIELDING HIM IF YOU CAN LEAD THE POLICE TO HIM.
IF HE'S A MURDERER BATMAN IS NO FRIEND OF MINE I'LL HELP ANY WAY I CAN. BARNES
WHAT HAPPENED HERE, COMMISSIONER?
AH--MR DAVIS OF THE NEWS I DID PROMISE YOU AN INTERVIEW. LET'S WALK..
LIQUOR STORE ROBBERY WAS IN PROGRESS BUT THE BATMAN CAME ALONG--
--AND ACCORDING TO THE OWNER OF THE STORE, BATMAN SNAPPED THE PERP'S NECK LIKE A TWIG--
SNAP


OWNER WAS MILDLY IRRITATED THAT BATMAN CHOSE, FOR GOOD MEASURE APPARENTLY, TO TOSS THE WOULD-BE THIEF THROUGH THE PLATE-GLASS WINDOW.
ONE INTERESTING ITEM, THOUGH--I HAPPEN TO RECOGNIZE THIS PARTICULAR PERP--
WHO IS HE?
THE CORRECT QUESTION IS WHO WAS HE--HE WAS AN ARMED ROBBER WHO WALKED AWAY FROM THE FATAL SHOOTING OF A CONVENIENCE STORE MANAGER, LAST YEAR.
DON'T TELL ME HE GOT OFF ON A TECHNICALITY.
YES REMEMBER TOMMY CARMA?
SURE - THE YOUNGEST DETECTIVE IN THE CITY PROMOTED FROM UNIFORM WHEN HE SINGLE HANDEDLY RESCUED A YOUNG WOMAN FROM A STREET GANG--
BUT HE WAS TOO EAGER. HE BROKE TOO MANY RULES--AND A FEW TOO MANY ARMS. IT MADE HIM A SLOPPY COP--PERPS WALKED 'CAUSE OF HIS "POLICE BRUTALITY" CHARGES--
I REMEMBER THE REST OF THE STORY
THOUGHT YOU WOULD. AND I THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE THE CARMA CONNECTION OF THESE KILLINGS--WHICH I'LL MENTION TO BARNES.. TOMORROW. TAKE CARE, OLD FRIEND.

WHY CAN'T I GO ALONG?
THIS ONE'S TOO DANGEROUS, JASON.

THE NAME IS ROBIN-- AND DANGER IS WHAT MY JOB'S SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT!

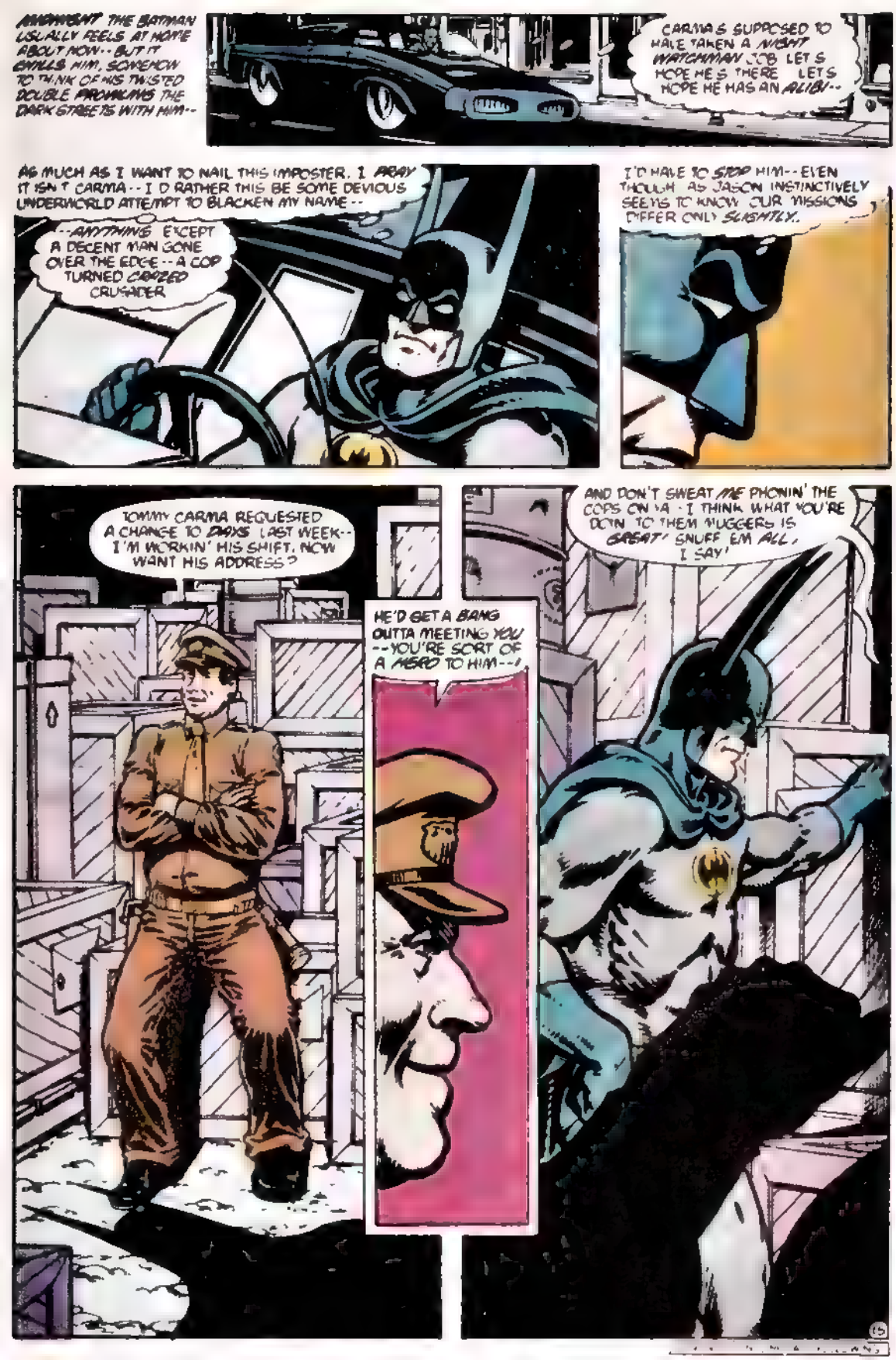
TOMMY CARMA'S CONFUSION ABOUT THE ENDS AND THE MEANS IS WHAT MAKES HIM A VERY DANGEROUS MAN--
BUT WASN'T HE A COP?

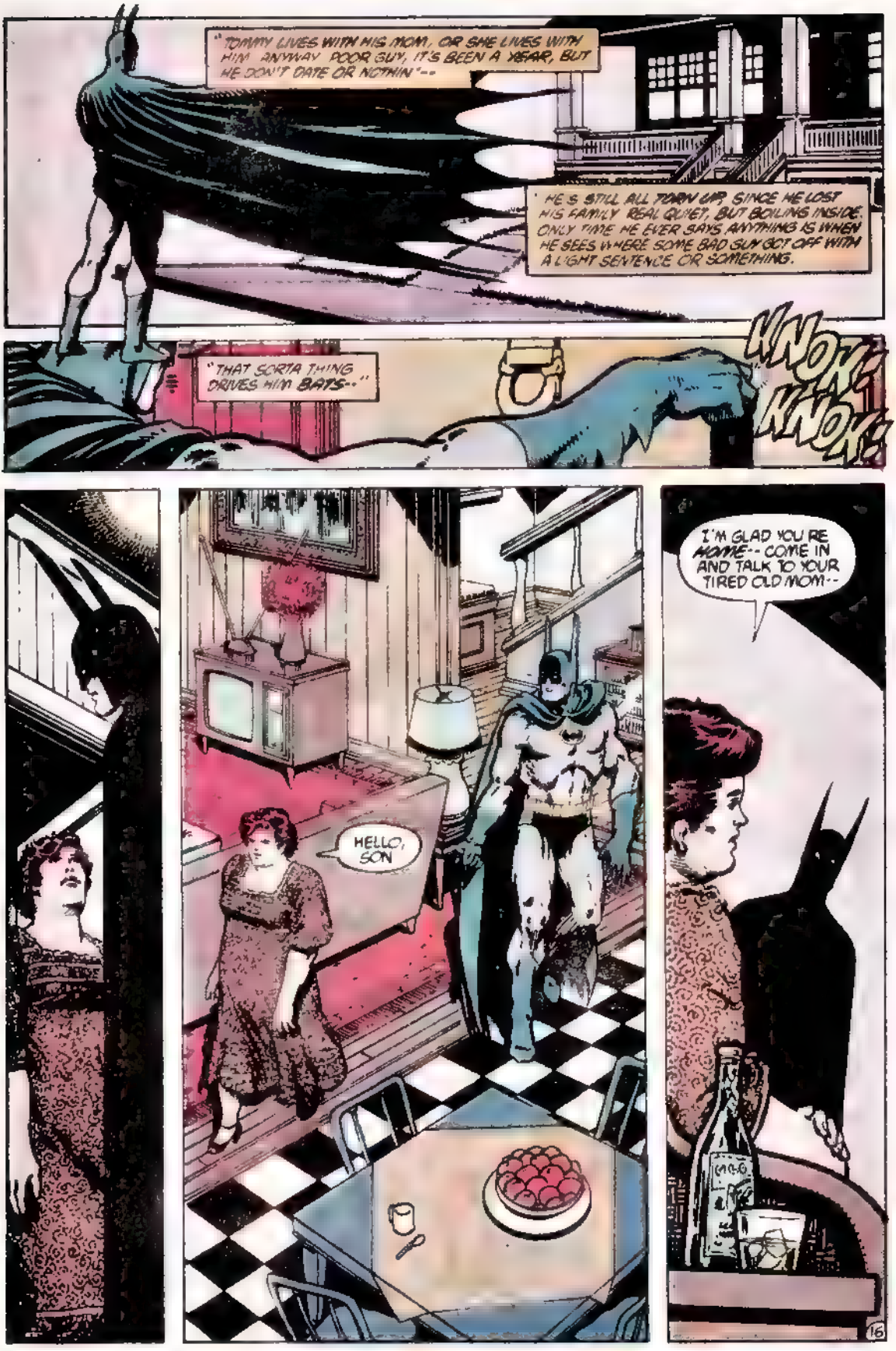
YES-- AND A GOLDEN GLOVES BOXER, A BLACK-BELT KARATE EXPERT, A FORMER MARINE, AND A MAN WITH A GOOD REASON TO HATE CRIMINALS.
WHY IS THAT?

NOT DANGER, JASON. JUSTICE. LET'S NOT CONFUSE THE ENDS WITH THE MEANS

TOMMY CARMA COLLARED A MOB HITMAN IN THE ACT - HAD HIM DEAD BANG COLD- NO TECHNICALITY, THIS TIME--

TOMMY WAS THE ONLY EYEWITNESS, THOUGH, AND THE MOB TRIED TO WASTE HIM-- ONLY IT WAS TOMMY'S WIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL WHEN THE CAR EXPLODED. HIS SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER WAS IN THE CAR, TOO--
14


ANONYMOUS THE BATMAN USUALLY FEELS AT HOME ABOUT NOW-- BUT IT CHILLS HIM, SOMEHOW TO THINK OF HIS TWISTED DOUBLE PROWLING THE DARK STREETS WITH HIM--
CARMA'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE TAKEN A NIGHT WATCHMAN JOB LET'S HOPE HE'S THERE LET'S HOPE HE HAS AN ALIBI--
AS MUCH AS I WANT TO NAIL THIS IMPOSTER, I PRAY IT ISN'T CARMA-- I'D RATHER THIS BE SOME DEVIOUS UNDERWORLD ATTEMPT TO BLACKEN MY NAME--
--ANYTHING EXCEPT A DECENT MAN GONE OVER THE EDGE-- A COP TURNED CRAZED CRUSADER
I'D HAVE TO STOP HIM-- EVEN THOUGH AS JASON INSTINCTIVELY SEEMS TO KNOW, OUR MISSIONS DIFFER ONLY SLIGHTLY.
TOMMY CARMA REQUESTED A CHANGE TO DAYS LAST WEEK-- I'M WORKIN' HIS SHIFT. NOW WANT HIS ADDRESS?
HE'D GET A BANG OUTTA MEETING YOU --YOU'RE SORT OF A HERO TO HIM--!
AND DON'T SWEAT ME PHONIN' THE COPS ON YA - I THINK WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' TO THEM MUGGERS IS GREAT! SNUFF 'EM ALL, I SAY!
15

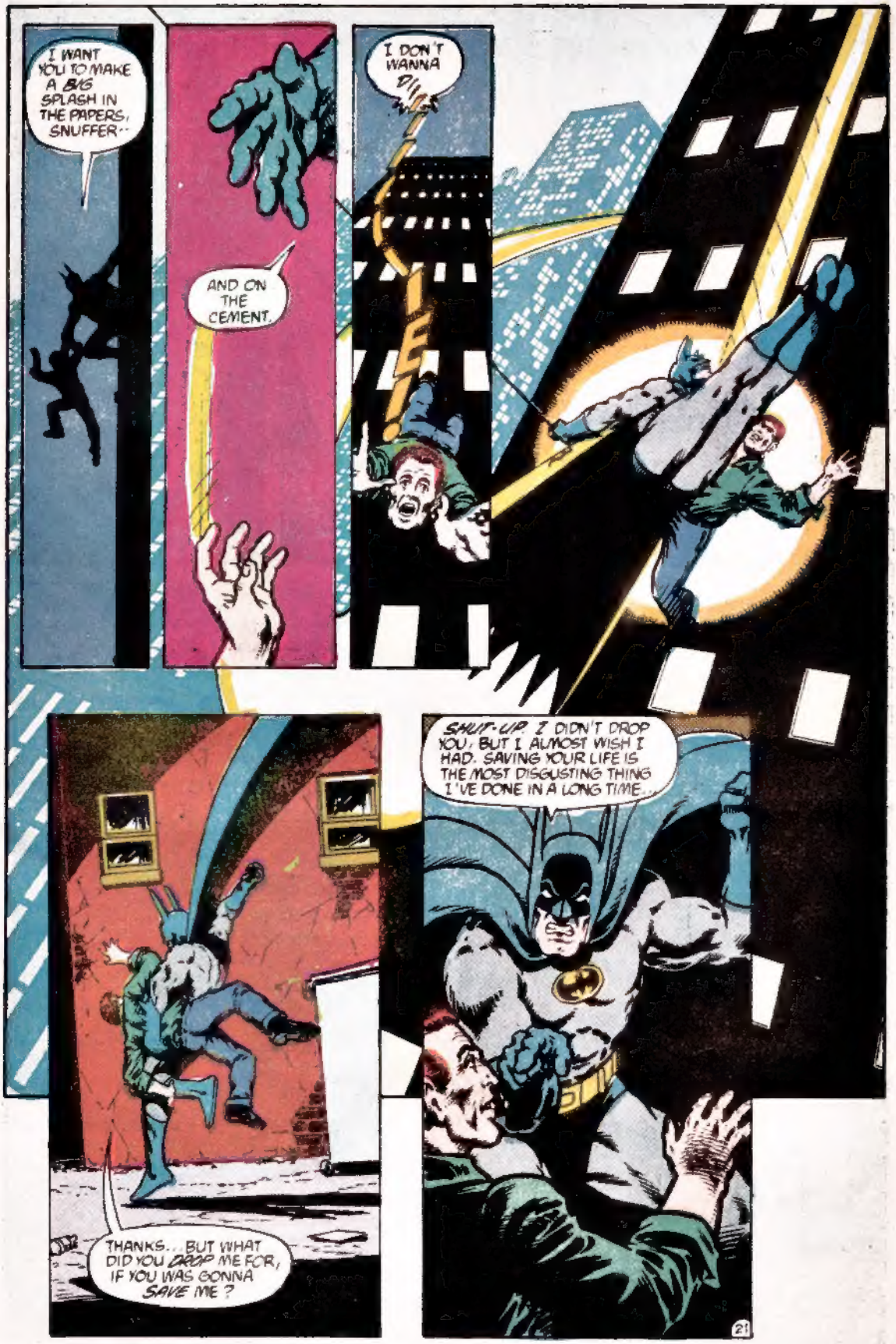

"TOMMY LIVES WITH HIS MOM, OR SHE LIVES WITH HIM ANYWAY POOR GUY, IT'S BEEN A YEAR, BUT HE DON'T DATE OR NOTHIN"--
HE'S STILL ALL TORN UP SINCE HE LOST HIS FAMILY REAL QUIET, BUT BOILING INSIDE. ONLY TIME HE EVER SAYS ANYTHING IS WHEN HE SEES WHERE SOME BAD GUY GOT OFF WITH A LIGHT SENTENCE OR SOMETHING.
"THAT SORTA THING DRIVES HIM BATS--"
KNOK! KNOK!
HELLO, SON
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HOME-- COME IN AND TALK TO YOUR TIRED OLD MOM--
16

DON'T BE MAD AT ME FOR DRINKING, SON-- I KNOW WHAT THE DOCTOR SAYS BUT AFTER A LONG DAY LOOKIN' AFTER SICK OLD FOLKS AT THE NURSING HOME WELL, YOU GET SO YOU CAN'T LOOK ANOTHER BED PAN IN THE FACE--
AND SON--WHAT YOU'RE DOING-- I KNOW YOU THINK IT'S RIGHT-- BUT IT ISN'T IT'S WRONG
IT'S HARD ON YOUR OLD MOTHER -
SON! FACE REALITY-- YOU'RE NOT THE BATMAN! YOU'RE TOMMY..
MY TOMMY
I KNOW YOU ADMIRE HIM, WORSHIPPED HIM, AS A TEENAGER WANTED TO BE LIKE HIM--
YOU EVEN NAMED YOUR LITTLE GIRL "ROBIN"--
BUT YOU'RE NOT HIM-- YOU'RE NOT THE BATMAN!
NOT THE BATMAN
17

THESE CLIPPINGS -- THEY GO BACK YEARS TO MY FIRST CASES.
STRANGE WITHOUT KNOWING OF THE BATCAVE, HE'S DONE HIS INSTINCTIVE BEST TO APPROXIMATE IT COMPUTER POLICE BAND RADIO. MAKESHIFT CRIME LAB...
JUDGING BY WHAT HIS MOTHER SAID CARMA ISN'T JUST IMPERSONATING ME -- HE THINKS HE IS ME
MAYBE IF I CAN FACE HIM -- MAYBE IF HE CAN BE CONFRONTED WITH THE REAL ME, HE'LL COME BACK TO HIS OWN REALITY WHATEVER'S LEFT OF IT BUT WHERE IS HE?
HMMM NOT ALL OF THESE CLIPPINGS ARE ABOUT ME. AND THESE THREE HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT
WALKS
MURDER
DENCE RULED INADMISSABLE
STATE WITNESS
18

GOOD LORD, MAN--ARE YOU CRAZY?
THAT DOES SEEM TO BE THE QUESTION
BUT IT'S NOT THE ONE I WANT ANSWERED. WHERE ARE YOU KEEPING THE SNUFFER?
THIS IS WHAT I GET FOR WORKING LATE YOU ASSER. OF COURSE, TO A CERTAIN MOB ASSASSIN, WHO IS DUE TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE GRAND JURY TOMORROW.
GO TO YOUR ROOM, LOWLIFE.
STAY AWAY FROM THE WINDOW, SNUFFER.
COME ON, GUYS--DEAL ME IN WE'RE ALL PROFESSIONALS HERE!
IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS WHOLESALER IN SLAUGHTER'S GETTING IMMUNITY, A NEW FACE, A NEW LIFE AND A PILE OF THE TAX-PAYER'S MONEY TO RAT ON OTHER RATS.
LIFE IS COMPROMISE WE HAVE HIM ON ICE, THE FBI'S IN ON IT WITH US, BECAUSE HE'S THEIR'S NEXT.

JEEZ··
NO·· NO
WHAT DO I WANT?
WHAT DO YOU WANT, BATMAN? I'LL TALK·· I HELD STUFF BACK FROM THE FEDS, EVEN! I'LL CUT YA IN ON MY SWITZERLAND DOUGH!
20


I WANT YOU TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH IN THE PAPERS, SNUFFER··
AND ON THE CEMENT.
I DON'T WANNA DI
IE!
SHUT-UP. I DIDN'T DROP YOU, BUT I ALMOST WISH I HAD. SAVING YOUR LIFE IS THE MOST DISGUSTING THING I'VE DONE IN A LONG TIME...
THANKS.. BUT WHAT DID YOU DROP ME FOR, IF YOU WAS GONNA SAVE ME?
21

YOU SAVED HIM! HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO LIVE!
WH-WHY- WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE ME?
YOU GOT IT BACKWARDS, TOMMY-- YOU'RE DRESSED LIKE ME.
IMPOSTER!
I'M THE DARK KNIGHT AVENGER--
DON'T MAKE ME FIGHT YOU, TOMMY.
WHY DO YOU CALL ME THAT? I'M THE BATMAN!

BATMAN?
ROBIN?
ROBIN...
HE'S OUT--HE WAS PRETTY TOUGH--
I SHOULD BE ANGRY WITH YOU FOR FOLLOWING ME--BUT I'M GRATEFUL. I WAS ABLE TO STOP THIS BEFORE ONE OF US GOT REALLY HURT.
POLICE SIRENS. WANT TO SPLIT?
NO--I'VE GOT TO STICK AROUND AND CLEAR MY NAME--THEN MAYBE GET THESE BUSTED RIBS BANDAGED..
BROKE SOME RIBS, HUH? THAT WHY YOU DIDN'T HIT THAT GUY SOONER?
ROBIN, SOMEHOW IT WAS HARD TO SWING AT HIM. AFTER ALL, WHO AM I BUT JUST ANOTHER GUY WHO THINKS HE'S THE BATMAN?
23

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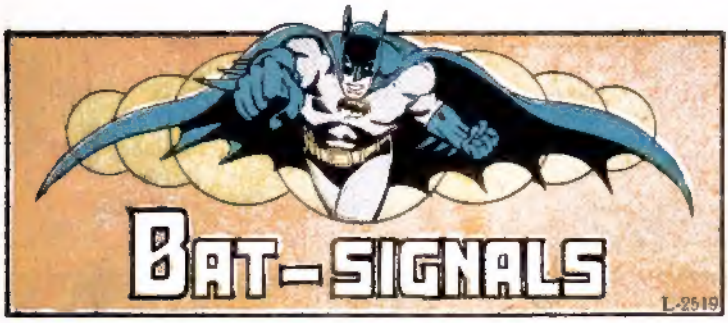

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THE BATMAN/ DICK TRACY CONNECTION

by Max Allan Collins

When editor Denny O'Neil gave me the opportunity to script an issue of BATMAN, I took the assignment eagerly. While I've worked in the comics field for almost ten years, my experience has been in the syndicated strip field, with DICK TRACY (for Tribune Media Services), and in that of so-called independent or alternative comics, with *Ms. Tree* (for several publishers, currently Renegade Press). I viewed this assignment as a chance for a longtime comic book fan to (finally) work for the company that started it all.

But, most of all, I relished getting to spin a yarn about my favorite comic-book superhero, a character whose four-color exploits I've followed since the late '50s. I was about ten years old when I first read BATMAN, and any BATMAN story that doesn't turn me into a rapt ten-year-old again doesn't really cut it with me.

I don't mean to suggest that BATMAN is kid's stuff. For one thing, when I was ten, I didn't consider myself a kid. BATMAN was *serious* stuff to me—like another character I was following, Zorro (not the Disney version, but the sporadic Dell one-shot comic books, usually drawn by the brilliant Everett Raymond Kinstler). Batman was a hardhitting crime fighter who donned a mask and cloak to better do battle with (and strike fear into) the criminal element. I liked what has come to be seen as the "film noir" quality of the strip—Batman went where the criminals were: the dark nighttime streets of Gotham City. I liked the fact that he took along a young partner (who was probably about my age, I reasoned—no "kid," either) and that he treated this young partner exactly as that: a partner, and a trusted one.

When I began reading comics, the superhero books were dying out—only BATMAN, WONDER WOMAN and SUPERMAN remained a vital part of the scene (though I vaguely remember reading the final few issues of PLASTIC MAN). When I began reading BATMAN, his adventures (signed Bob Kane) were often the work of writer Bill Finger and artist Dick Sprang. There has been a lot of talk, lately, about the "definitive" BATMAN. With all due respect to the likes of Bob Kane, Jerry Robinson, Neal Adams, Dick Giordano, Frank Robbins, Jim Aparo, Marshall Rogers, Steve Englehart, Frank Miller and even one Denny O'Neil, the definitive BATMAN to me will always be the Finger/Sprang version.

Much of that has to do with Dick Sprang's wonderfully exaggerated, perspective-bending style, as vibrant and dynamic a vehicle for the dark knight detective as the Batmobile itself. Like Bob Kane, Sprang sprang largely from Chester Gould. Sprang was a looser, more fluid artist than Chet; but, like Kane, he shared with Gould an ability to tell an adventure story in a manner that instinctively merged caricature and illustration. This was particularly obvious in Sprang's villains (his Joker had a mouth like a frying pan and you could spear a fish with Penguin's beak).

Though I didn't exactly know it at the time, I was obviously attracted to BATMAN because of the Kane/Sprang artistic resemblance to Chester Gould. As has been noted elsewhere (and done to death by the p.r. folks), I was a major TRACY fan as a kid—from about age seven on. I followed TRACY not in the papers, but in the Harvey reprint comics. Since the DICK TRACY comic book only came out once a month, I had to find a few other comic books to fill in with between hits of Gould. And, soon, BATMAN had taken a strong second place behind TRACY; besides, I could get extra jolts of BATMAN from DETECTIVE and WORLD'S FINEST.

It was years later before I understood what it was—beyond the Kane/Sprang artwork—that made BATMAN such a natural choice for a TRACY fan. BATMAN was, essentially, DICK TRACY in superhero drag (Bob Kane once admitted as much to me). Like Tracy, he was a firm-jawed hero who swore to battle crime over the corpse of a fallen loved one (in Batman's case, there were two loved ones, parents, whereas Tracy lost his father-in-law-to-be). Like Tracy, he fought an array of grotesque villains whose physiognomies mirrored their colorful monikers. Like Tracy, he often fought side-by-side with a youthful ward (in Tracy's case, it was an adopted son, Junior). Like Tracy, he relied on the science of a crime lab to aid his already keen abilities as a detective. And, like Tracy, he never failed to track down and bring a rough sort of justice to the lawbreakers.

The major difference between the two detectives was one of costuming; and pacing. TRACY was designed for newspaper strips, and, in comic book reprint, his adventures often took many months to play out (even in the papers, an average story ran over three months). BATMAN, on the other hand designed directly for the comic books, could accomplish in 8 to 12 wild pages what it took TRACY many methodical months to do! And Batman pulled that off several times an issue, to boot.

TRACY sputtered out as a monthly comic book, after a distinguished run of 145 issues; but BATMAN continues on, partially because the character was designed specifically for the medium in which he became a superstar. Both characters endure, but in their original chosen medium (both attempts to make a newspaper strip out of BATMAN proved less than enormously successful).

As for me, I remain a lucky ten-year-old who got a chance to have a crack at both of his favorite comic-book characters.